

Back to Basics | Week 4

Honor Your Father and Mother

August 27, 2023

We've been in a series the last several weeks called, "Back to Basics," and today we are going to dive into Exodus 20:12. We are learning about the **Ten Commandments** and how relevant they are in our lives.

When we think of the Ten Commandments, many of us think of a list of rules telling us what not to do. But the truth is **God designed the Ten Commandments as a way for us to have a relationship with Him.**

This is a commandment that deals with **our relationship to our parents.**

Exodus 20:12 (NLT)

Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

This is the first commandment with **a promise** attached to it.

A little important background information:

- The first 4 commandments deal, primarily, with **our relationship to God.**
- The last commandments deal with our **relationship to each other.**
- In between those two sections is this little commandment. The question is, **which group does this one belong in?** The answer is BOTH.

This commandment is the **bridge** between those two types of commandments.

- This is a commandment that deals with human relationships, but **there is hardly anything that forms or influences our relationship to God like our relationship with our parents.**

- In the home is where we learn **authority and responsibility.**

- It's where we learn **right from wrong.**

- It's where we **first feel what it is to be valued, cherished and loved unconditionally.**

- It's where we feel **safety and security.**

I can tell you without a doubt that my parents did a fantastic job in this area. They applied Biblical principles in everything they did and pointed me to a **healthy personal relationship with Jesus from the very beginning.**

I saw my parents love Jesus, but I also saw them love each other and me and my siblings. **As a result, I learned what a true, authentic relationship with Jesus looked like in a safe and secure environment.**

Unfortunately, not everyone has that same experience.

Maybe you would say, **"My home was screwed up!"**

Here's the thing: ***When the home is screwed up, inevitably our relationship with God is impacted.***

I've had many people tell me that when I talk about God as a Heavenly Father, they struggle with that concept.

Their response: "If God is anything like my earthly father, they want nothing to do with that!"

Because of their experience with their earthly father, they struggle to trust or rely on a Heavenly Father, even though He loves them unconditionally and can always be trusted.

Your relationship with your parents has a profound impact on how you view God.

- If you had a dad who was really demanding, never-satisfied, you end up thinking that about God as well. You end up resenting Him.
- If you had a dad who was unfaithful, you may end up struggling to believe that God will be faithful and never leave you or forsake you.
- If you had a dad who was emotionally distant, you may feel like you are constantly seeking his approval. In the same way, somehow you feel that you have to also earn the approval of your Heavenly Father.

I want to be really honest with you. Some of you had some really screwed up homes - abusive situations and honestly, you've never come to terms with how it is affecting you. It affects your career, how you relate to your family, your marriage and even how you relate to God.

It is time some of you deal with it and find the healing God has provided for you. We aren't going to be able to tackle all of that in one message today, and I really encourage you to seek out a great Christian counselor who can help you unpack that stuff. We'd love to help you find those resources.

Okay, having said all of that, let's dive into the verse and unpack what it actually says.

The verse is broken down into two parts.

There is a DIRECTIVE and a PROMISE.

SLIDE IS PROGRESSIVE

The directive is, **"HONOR YOUR PARENTS."**

In short, "to honor" means to recognize your parents as the "stand-ins for God during very formative years...and honor and respect them for the fact that they represent Him to you as a child."

If we do that, the promise is, **"you will live long in the land."**

This isn't saying that if you are nice to your parents, you'll never get sick or have a problem or difficult situation.

He's telling the entire nation of Israel that if they honor their parents, their **community will flourish and their nation will thrive.**

Why? Because...

The family is the fundamental unit of society.

If the family is healthy and intact, the community will be healthy.

The church is only as healthy as the families and individuals that call it home!

If you want to see revival happen in a city, it will begin in the church. But, if you want to see revival happen in a church, it will begin in our homes.

Look what Moses says in the very next chapter:

Exodus 21:17 (NLT)

Anyone who dishonors father or mother must be put to death.

Ouch. That sounds rough.

You may be thinking, **"THANK GOD FOR GRACE, I SHOULD HAVE DIED SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 8TH-9TH GRADES!"**

ILLUSTRATION - My dad would call me down while preaching and tell me to sit with my mom. I blatantly disobeyed him publicly in front of the entire church. I'm surprised God didn't strike me down and I'm even more surprised my dad didn't!!

The reality is, the family was seen as vitally important. The community saw an assault on the family as an assault on the public good.

So, an attack on the family was an attack on society.

If you unravel the family, you unravel society.

PERSONALLY, I BELIEVE WE ARE SEEING THE FALLOUT OF THAT FACT IN OUR SOCIETY TODAY.

If there has ever been an all-out spiritual attack on the family, we see it today.

ILLUSTRATION - I was standing in line at the bank and overheard a couple of people talking this week. One person asked the other if they were married. The gentleman said, "No, but I've been with my girlfriend for 13 years. We just had our first child, but I'd never get married, I've got too much to lose to get married." I still don't know exactly what that comment was all about, but I wanted to ask some questions!

You've got 13 years of your life invested in a romantic relationship with a woman you now have a child with, but you've got too much to lose to marry her?

Here's what I learned from eavesdropping on that conversation.

Our society has some messed up views of marriage and family.

That's why the name of this series is so important to me.

BACK TO BASICS - We have to learn and be consistent in applying God's Word to our lives...especially as parents because we aren't just being shaped as followers of Jesus, but we are shaping the lives and view of God in the eyes of our children.

In your role as a parent, you temporarily stand in for God. - Pastor JD Greear

I know that sounds scary, but it's not.

The same delight, unconditional love and acceptance that you feel from your Heavenly Father, you should instill in your children.

Psychologists say every child needs to consistently hear 3 things:

1. I love you.

2. I'm proud of you.

3. You are good at something.

GO TITLE SLIDE

ILLUSTRATION - THE WORDS YOU SPEAK OVER ONE ANOTHER IS EVERYTHING. YOU CAN SPEAK LIFE OVER YOUR KIDS OR CRITICISM.

-LEGEND & WORLD CHANGER

Your words are important, but your actions speak louder!

ILLUSTRATION - REGGIE DABBS STORY

You must speak life, but you also must be willing to **DISCIPLINE**.

When you teach them to obey and you exercise discipline, you are teaching them to obey not only your authority, but the authority of God.

DISCLAIMER - Our discipline should not be an attempt to keep our kids under OUR control or punishing them for annoying me or making life difficult for me or embarrassing me - but to bring them under God's authority.

Parents, when you get angry at your child, what is it usually about?

Is it because they have inconvenienced you, another you, embarrassed you or broken something that upsets you? Or is your anger a righteous, loving anger that is grieved at how their little hearts are in rebellion against God?

My reaction to your behavior should never be:

“How did this affect me?”

Instead, we should consider:

“What is going on in their hearts toward God?”

As a parent, I would often see a behavior that concerned me. Even if it was a minimal offense, I would ask, **“If I leave this behavior unchecked, what does it turn into?”**

We create culture in our homes intentionally by decisions we make and UNintentionally by decisions we DON'T make!

Let's talk about some of those CHOICES we must INTENTIONALLY MAKE.

There must be some **NON-NEGOTIABLES** in our families. My parents were the greatest at this stuff. They just got it right!

- **Going to church** as a family was ALWAYS a priority.
- **Prayer** was a part of EVERY FAMILY EXPERIENCE. It still is. Just a few days ago we were at Goodberry's with my sister/brother-in-law. We were about to tell them goodbye and my brother-in-law said, "Hey let's pray together right here before we leave." We made the Goodberry's fountain a family altar.
- **God's Word trumped EVERYTHING.** It didn't matter what other families did. The only thing that mattered was what God's Word says about it. I would say, "But their parents let them do it!" That was never a great reason for anything. My dad would say, "They aren't my children and they aren't your parents."
- We learned that you can **apply Biblical principles in every area of life.**
- Making memories and laughing with our family was priceless.
- Dealing with conflict in a Biblical way is a must.
- Love people BIG!
- No matter what, put Jesus FIRST.

ILLUSTRATION - Matthew 6:33 and baseball tryouts.

The Commandment says, "**HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.**"

There were 5 of us kids. I've never seen any of my siblings DISHONOR my mom and dad. And I think I can tell you why:

If you want to be honored, live your life in an honorable way!

I'm almost 50 years old and I've never once seen a discrepancy between what they preach and what they live.

Understand the principle: **You temporarily stand-in for God, which means there is a place where your authority ends and where God's authority begins.**

All you are doing is training them up for His purposes and handing them off.

There is a point, MOM AND DAD, where you must RELEASE your kids.

- **"This is where I want you to live."**
- **"This is what I want you to do."**
- **"This is who I want you to be."**

Mom and dad, you do NOT get to make those choices for your children.

You can coach them and help them figure out what God is speaking to them, but you must allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct them.

You are not God. Those kids are ultimately His, not yours, so after you have taught them to obey God, you must release them and let them go!

I think the fundamental goal of parenting is simple:

We must strive to raise independent kids who love and serve Jesus on their own.

When our kids grow up and become independent, especially when they are making spiritually-wise choices, we should rejoice - JOB WELL DONE!

Right now, our kids - ALL of THEM - are in that critical decade of their lives. They are choosing careers, relationships, pathways, places to live, people to influence their lives, developing disciplines and routines, learning how to manage their money and ultimately making their faith their own. If I'm honest, at this point, we are glorified coaches in their lives. We can't make those choices for them. We can't hear from God for them. We have taught them, trained them, modeled the way for them, now we have to stand back and let the Holy Spirit guide them and do for them what we can NEVER do!

I can assure you - I DON'T ALWAYS GET THESE THINGS RIGHT.

So, the question is, how do you respond when you blow it as a parent...especially when you parent OLDER children?

THINGS ADULT CHILDREN WANT TO

HEAR:

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- "I didn't know what you needed. What can I do now? "
- "I was in survival mode."
- "Do you want advice or would you prefer if I just listen?"
- "Even when you upset me, I still love you."
- "I didn't handle that well. Let me try again."
- "You're right."
- "I want you to find out what works best for you. You don't have to do it my way."
- "Thank you."
- "I'm proud of you."
- "I enjoy your company."


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GO TITLE SLIDE

If you have **smaller kids**, that day is coming. **Right now, it's time for you to teach, train and model the way!**

Now, if you have adult children that aren't making the greatest choices, that doesn't mean you failed as a parent and didn't do all of those things. **It simply means that they are still a work in process - like all of us - and need some more coaching and A LOT of prayer! But, don't you dare give up.**

Remind them they are loved, accepted and that no matter where they are in life, GOD HAS A PLAN FOR THEIR LIVES.

Okay, let's hit the other side of this commandment.

Kids - we have to honor these amazing people we call mom and dad.

What does that mean?

Well, you have to cut the grass anytime it's over 2 inches, make your bed every day and never make anything less than an A in school.

Okay, maybe not. Let me give you a really concise description of what it means to Biblically honor your parents and then we will ask some important questions.

To honor your parents means to recognize the institution of parenthood as the temporary stand-in for God that it is and respect it accordingly.

What does that mean? That's clear as mud Anthony.

When you live at home as a child, you obey them; and for all of your life, you respect them.

Okay, a few questions:

How can we honor someone when they are being dishonorable?

You may say, "You don't understand. My parents are truly bad, manipulative, controlling people." Some of you may even say, "My parents abused me...how am I supposed to respect them?"

I don't want to minimize the trivialize that hurt, but **even if you can't respect them as individuals, you can respect the institution they represent.**

Which means, you certainly don't approve of or condone what they do; you don't even always submit to what they tell you, and you certainly don't allow them to dominate you, control you or abuse you; but you can still show a level of respect to the office they hold.

ILLUSTRATION - You can respect the office of the President, without being a fan or supporter of the person who holds the office.

Here is why that is so important:

When you honor your parents, you are honoring the God behind your parents.

The greatest way that I can show honor to my parents is to OBEY God in every area of my life. After all, they dedicated me to the Lord, therefore there is no greater honor to them as parents than to be obedient to God the Father.

Moms and dads, my prayer for you is that your kids would hear clearly the voice of God through you.

Your kids need to frequently hear three phrases from you:

1. I love you.
2. I'm proud of you.
3. There's something you are really good at.

IMAGE - As Mr. Allen says, "It's a sorry cow that won't lick her own calf."

If your kids don't learn to feel the love that God has for them from you, they may never learn to feel it at all.